

DIRECTOR'S LETTER OF INSTRUCTION

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Page 1 of 4

LAND DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: PROGRAM TO IDENTIFY, CONSTRUCT AND MAINTAIN
PATHWAYS ALONG COUNTY ROADS

PURPOSE:

To define planned and designated pathways, and describe procedures for their design, construction, improvement and maintenance.

SCOPE:

This letter applies to all DPW Land Development, Engineering Services and Transportation Division staff.

BACKGROUND:

The term "Pathways" as used in this DLI refers to non-motorized transportation facilities located within or adjacent to road rights-of-way. Pathways are soft-surfaced, non-paved facilities typically located parallel to, but separate from, the vehicular portion of the roadway in the area identified as Parkway in the Public Road Standards. These facilities may serve both a transportation and recreation function and are an integral part of many community trail systems. Most community trail systems consist of remote trails crossing private or public lands in wilderness areas, open spaces, preserves, or other areas that offer scenic and enjoyable recreational surroundings. However, in many cases, there are critical gaps between trails where public access cannot be obtained. In such cases, pathways offer a means of public access capable of making critical connections or links that result in cohesive and connected community trail systems.

The concept of pathways being an integral part of regional and community trail systems was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1994. Board Policy I-116, Policy Establishing Criteria for the Development and Operation of a Regional and Community Plan Non-Motorized Trails and Pathways System, lays the groundwork for establishing a pathways program within DPW. In 2000, the Board reaffirmed its support of pathways

by approving the concept of a Trails Program utilizing private and public lands, and public road rights-of-way.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The design and construction of pathways should be coordinated with other improvement projects within DPW. Any project involving road widening or major road improvements, bridge construction, or flood control facilities placed within road right-of-way should consider whether pathway improvement, construction, or modification is needed. Staff responsible for such projects shall consult the two planning documents referenced below to determine if the road or project area impacts a planned or designated pathway.

Pathway Designation

This Letter of Instruction refers to planned and designated pathways. Since many County roads have graded, soft-surfaced shoulders of varied widths, it is important to understand when such a road shoulder is considered an official pathway. "Planned" pathways are those identified on the following Board approved planning documents.

- Regional Trail Map contained in the County General Plan, or
- A Community Trail Map contained in the Community Trails Master Plan.

Once a planned pathway is improved and constructed, the facility is considered "designated." Because of their function as part of an overall trail system, designated pathways have a higher degree of maintenance than non-designated road shoulders.

Interim Measures for Pathway Designation

Until such time that the Board of Supervisors adopts the planning documents referenced above, the following guidelines shall be used. Planned pathways will be defined as those identified on the USGS quadrangle maps maintained by DPW Land Development. These maps include pathway locations from six adopted community plans as well as those officially nominated by community planning and sponsor groups as part of the Board approved pathways program. Land Development staff will be responsible for maintaining these maps and compiling a list of County roads with planned and designated pathways. The maps and roads list will be updated and provided quarterly to DPW Engineering Services.

PROCEDURE:

Funding

Pathways are eligible for gas tax and other transportation related funds. TransNet and Road Fund sources should be considered when planning pathway improvement projects. There is current Board approval to budget up to ½ percent of the annual gas tax for pathway acquisition, construction and maintenance.

Implementation (Public Projects)

The implementation of pathways can occur in the following ways.

- As an independent Capital Improvement Project (CIP) or line item within the Detailed Work Program (DWP), or
- Integrated as a component of another CIP or DWP project involving road widening or major improvements, bridge construction, or flood control facilities within road right-of-way

Evaluation

Engineering Services staff will present the planned pathways list to the DPW Project Planning Committee. Pathways will be evaluated and rated by the committee along with other nominated projects. Specific funding sources will be identified as part of the overall project reviewed by the committee. Selected pathway projects will be identified as either stand-alone projects or integral components of other selected projects, and included in either the five-year CIP publication, or the DWP, whichever is deemed more appropriate by the committee.

Construction (Public Projects)

Engineering Services will be responsible for performing preliminary engineering, and subsequent phases of design and construction of pathway projects associated with the CIP or DWP. Minimum standards for construction are contained in the Public Road Standards. In areas with parkway widths of 10 feet or less, pathways are to be constructed in lieu of concrete or asphalt sidewalks. Constructing a pathway adjacent to a sidewalk should only be considered when parkway width is 15 feet or greater.

Implementation/Construction (Private Projects)

If adequate nexus and proportionality findings can be made, Land Development will require private development projects construct planned pathways. In such cases, Land Development will be responsible for assuring pathway improvements comply with Public Road Standards and the adopted Resolution of Approval for the project. Once the pathway is constructed, inspected by Construction Inspection staff, and final project recordation occurs, the pathway will be considered designated. Transportation Division staff will then be responsible for on-going maintenance of the designated pathway.

Resolution of Conflicting Requirements

In the event adopted standards, ordinances, or laws requiring provision of concrete sidewalks conflicts with provision of pathways as specified in this DLI, the appropriate Public Works Manager shall review the conflicting requirements to determine which facility is constructed or identify other feasible resolutions.

Maintenance

Transportation Division will be responsible for maintenance of designated pathways. Pathways require a higher degree of maintenance than typical road shoulders. Road

shoulders without designated pathways typically require maintenance based on conditions that could compromise safety. For example, weed abatement will be done if there are potential line-of-site obstructions for drivers; grading or placement of erosion control devices will occur if there are significant safety concerns associated with flooding or drainage problems.

Pathways, because of their designation and distinct function as community facilities require higher maintenance standards than typical road shoulders. Maintenance guidelines include:

- Keeping the pathway free of weeds, brush, rocks, or other obstructions.
- Trimming trees and other vegetation to maintain a vertical (overhead) clearance of 10 feet.
- Repairing erosion in a timely manner by grading, placement of new base material, or installing engineered drainage controls.

REFERENCES:

Public Road Standards

Board Policy I-116, Policy Establishing Criteria for the Development and Operation of a Regional and Community Plan Non-Motorized Trails and Pathways System (on the Web at: <http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/cntydepts/general/cob/policy/>)

County Counsel Opinion on Use of Gax Tax for Pathways (October 15, 1991)

Streets and Highways Code, Division 2, Section 951 (on the Web at: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>)

APPROVED BY:

JOHN L. SNYDER, DIRECTOR

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 17, 2002

REVISION DATE:

SUNSET DATE: April 30, 2007